

VZCZCXRO8950
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
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ZNR UUUUU ZZH ZFD
R 261038Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6916
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 001103

DEPT FOR AF/W
SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREF](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [GH](#)
SUBJECT: GHANA--EC CRITIQUES REGISTRATION, NPP LAUNCHES
CAMPAIGN

REF: A. A. ACCRA 01058
[1](#)B. B. ACCRA 01048

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The Deputy Commissioner of the Electoral Commission expressed concerns about the recently finished voter registration exercise. He acknowledged questions about the integrity of the voter roll following allegations of under-age and multiple registrations. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) held its annual convention and introduced its vice-presidential candidate to the party faithful. END SUMMARY.

EC Offers Critique of Voter Registration

[1](#)2. (SBU) USAID Ghana's Democracy and Governance Office Chief attended a meeting called by the Ghana Electoral Commission (EC) on August 15. EC Deputy Commissioner David Kanga briefed development partners on the recently completed voter registration exercise (REFTEL B). Kanga began by saying that an estimated 2-3 million people registered during the thirteen day exercise. This number is far in excess of the one million the EC had anticipated to have become eligible since the last exercise, in 2006. The EC's expected number was based on an estimated population growth rate of 3% per year and an expected 150,000 older first-time registrants. Kanga said that the EC is concerned about a "bloated" roll, including multiple and underage registrants. Kanga said that the EC would meet in the near future with the Inter-Party Advisory Committee, civil society and other stakeholders to discuss approaches to purging the registry of ineligible voters.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The EC's Kanga added his concern about the role of the political parties in the registration exercise, saying that he believed the parties encouraged underage and multiple registrations. Kanga, who has extensive international experience, likened the recent exercise to the 2007 election in Nigeria, which he witnessed. He also expressed concern over the lack of action by the security services, who were often present but who failed to enforce the law (REFTEL B). Kanga theorized that party representatives observing the registration process in their opponent's strongholds may have not complained about irregularities out of fear for their safety.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Kanga said that the EC is encouraging civil society groups to participate as election observers. He added that the EC also welcomes and encourages international observers, and asked that donors by September 15 give an indication to the UNDP of the scale of the observer missions that each embassy plans to field. (Note: The UNDP is organizing the international observer process. End Note.). An official of the UK High Commission said that they plan to deploy twenty-five teams of two observers each. Kanga explained that the EC is exploring ways to transmit election results more

quickly, to forestall potential election related conflict. He noted that Ghana Telecom, the local fixed line provider, has estimated that it would cost about \$1.5 million to connect the 230 district constituency offices to the main EC center.

15. (SBU). According to Kanga, the EC is preparing a supplementary budget for the Ministry of Finance to cover the higher than anticipated cost of the registration exercise. He added that he expects the Ministry to appeal directly to the donor community for support of the EC.

The NPP Holds Its Convention

16. (SBU). POLOFF attended the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) annual delegate convention August 16 in Takoradi, in Ghana's Western Region. The meeting was an opportunity for the party to "outdoor" or introduce its vice-presidential candidate, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. Dr. Bawumia, the deputy head of the central bank, is a technocrat not well known to the party faithful (REFTEL A). Party officials used the meeting of delegates to revisit the party's accomplishments, in a series of detail oriented speeches that failed to hold the attendees attention. Party unity was a sub-theme of the event, reflecting the inter-party conflicts of the presidential and parliamentary candidate selection processes. Party National Chairman Peter Mac Manu opened the event by reminding the faithful of the need to both maintain party discipline and support for NPP candidates. Neither Presidential Candidate Nana Akufo-Addo or VP candidate Bawumia spoke during the first day session. Bawumia was present, and received a polite but unenthusiastic response from the audience. Late in the day President John Kufuor addressed the session, and received a warm response as he outlined the accomplishments of the

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past eight years. He praised Bawumia's youthfulness and financial expertise. The two candidates spoke the next day at a large rally in Takoradi, where Bawumia was introduced as the VP candidate.

17. (SBU). Going on the theme of "We Are Moving Forward," the NPP released its election manifesto. The platform focuses on the achievements of the party, while also calling for expansions of programs begun by the NPP government. For example, the manifesto calls for free senior high school education, expansion of the National Health Insurance Scheme, expansion of the National Youth Employment Program (a job creation program) and a doubling of the number of police officers. The manifesto also calls for the creation of a cabinet level "drug czar" to head a more powerful Narcotics Control Agency. To further economic development, the manifesto calls for an Industrial Development Fund and a Northern Development Fund, each to be capitalized with USD \$1 billion. Transport, housing and agriculture would also receive more resources under an Akufo-Addo administration.

Comment

18. (SBU) COMMENT. The Electoral Commission Deputy Director's frank admission of problems with the voter registration exercise is a positive step. The Commission still needs to implement measures to restore confidence in its impartiality, but a plan to review the voter rolls for "bloated" registrations is a positive step, and working through the Inter-party Advisory Group is the best approach toward reaching a consensus for cleaning the rolls. END COMMENT.
BROWN